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Vol. II

Record Reviews for February, 1939

No. 2

BY R. D. DARRELL

Archangelsky: God, Hear My Prayer (Psalm 55) & Lvovsky: Requiem. Don Cossack Choir (unacc., in Russian) conducted by Serge Jaroff. 2 sides, 12" disc, No. C-7352M, price \$1.25.

The doleful Archangelsky supplication (a re-pressing of C-DX12) is an ineffective vehicle for the dramatically-minded Cossack Choir, but it does some suprisingly "straight" singing in the *Requiem* (a re-pressing of C-DFX47) by G. Lvovsky, a composer best-known by the *Lord have mercy (Hospodee Pomeelooy)* made famous by the Russian Symphonic Choir (V-78890).

BACH

Bach: Chorale-Prelude "Komm Gott, Schöpfer, heiliger Geist" & Mendelssohn: Sonata (Organ) No. 6 in D minor—Finale (Andante). Edouard Commette (St. Jean Cathedral, Lyons, France, organ). 2 sides, 10" disc, No. C-402M, price 75c.

A popular favorite among the Commette discs, originally issued (as C-DF680) a good many years ago, but despite its age a happy choice for re-pressing in the seventy-five cent series. This is still the only recording of the original version of the chorale-prelude (also known in the Schönberg orchestral setting). The Mendelssohn Sonata finale was incorrectly entered in the *Encyclopedia of Recorded Music*: the fourth movement, Fugue, is unrecorded; Commette plays only the fifth movement, Andante.

Bach: Toccatas and Fugues in C minor & D major. Artur Schnabel (piano). 4 sides each, 2-10" discs, Nos. V-1952/5, in Set VM-532, price complete with album \$6.50 (Parcel Post prepaid to any part of the U.S.A.).

Both works are listed here as Toccatas, but the first is usually known as the Toccata and Fugue in C minor (Peters Vol. 4, No. 5; previously recorded by Marcel Maas in

CM-X4) and the second as either the Toccata and Fugue or Fantasia and Fugue in D major (Peters Vol. 9, No. 3; previously recorded in harpsichord versions by Landowska in V-15172/3—reviewed last October—and Pessl in CM-X70). I find it hard to give an impartial evaluation of Schnabel's reading of the great C minor work—one of Bach's finest keyboard compositions—for the Maas version has long been one of my most cherished and often played albums. Beside the expansiveness and intoxicating lyricism of Maas, Schnabel's sober clarity sounds almost pedestrian to me. And despite the advance in piano recording the new discs have a dry quality lacking the appealing warmth of the older version. I may be doing Schnabel an injustice here, but surely there can be no question but that even his fine reading of the D major work is eclipsed by Landowska's: this is harpsichord music, *par excellence*, and rhapsodic, large-canvas writing for which Landowska's bold dramaticism is ideally suited.

Bailey: Idless. Samuel Siegel (violin) & Gregory Tucker (piano). **Bowles: Huapango.** Jesus Durón (piano); **Cafe Sin Nombre & Huapango—El Sol.** Paul Bowles (piano). 2 sides, 12" disc, No. NMQR-1414, price \$2.00.

Two more young Americans are given their first recorded representation here by the pioneering New Music Quarterly Recordings: William H. Bailey (b. 1910), a student at the Eastman School and with Schönberg, and Paul Bowles (b. 1911), a student with Aaron Copland and composer of the ballet *Yankee Clipper*, the opera *Denmark Vesey*, the incidental music for *Doctor Faustus*, *Horse Eats Hat*, etc. Bailey has an obvious lyric talent, but this little piece is scarcely more than an atmospheric improvisation loosely hung together and bearing occasional indications of the affectation that marks its title, *Idless* (i.e. Idleness). Bowles, however, has the real gift and his wide travels and explora-

tions of folk music have given him a freedom and directness of expression that are immediately exciting and hold rich promise for his future. The Pan-American dances played here (*Huapango* is the Spanish form of the Indian word *Cuapanco*, meaning "danced on a board") are only miniatures, but they, like the remarkable excerpts from *Denmark Vesey* I have heard in concert, are infused with tremendous vitality and reveal a remarkably keen sense of control and direction. Watch and listen for Paul Bowles: to my mind he's one of our most significant coming native talents.

Beethoven: Coriolan Overture, Op. 62. London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Bruno Walter. 2 sides, 12" disc, No. V-12535, price \$1.50.

None of the some nine previous recordings of *Coriolanus* is of recent origin, so Walter is not offered much competition as far as recording quality goes. But apart from the greater tonal spaciousness, the lack of dramatic breadth and force places Walter's reading as a second choice to the earlier but far tauter Boult version (V-11909). A definitive recorded performance, however, is still unavailable.

Bortniansky: Hymn of the Cherubims No. 7 & Tchesnokov: Prayer during Lent. Russian Cathedral at Paris Choir (unacc., in Russian) conducted by N. Afonsky. 2 sides, 12" disc, No. V-36223, price \$1.25.

Reviewed from the imported pressing (G-L1005) in the *Record Supplement* for November 1937 as one of the finest records of Russian liturgical music, coupling the seraphic *Cherubic Hymn* of Bortniansky (with solo women's trio) and Paul Tchesnokov's imploring *Prayer*, the latter with solo passages by Mme. G. Pavlenko and both with superbly recorded organ tones of Russian contra-basses.

Bowles: Huapango, Cafe Sin Nombre, Huapango—El Sol. See reverse-side of Bailey: *Idless*.

BRAHMS

Brahms: Sonata (Clarinet and Piano) in F minor, Op. 120, No. 1. David Weber & Ray Lev. 6 sides, 3-12" discs, Nos. MC-1097/9, in Set MC-27, price complete with album \$5.00 (Parcel Post prepaid to any part of the U.S.A.).

The release of this first recording of the F minor work completes the gramophonic repertory of the two Op. 120 sonatas in both their original clarinet-piano and optional viola-piano versions. (Incidentally, it gives me an opportunity to correct and apologize for a careless error in last month's *Supplement* when I listed the *Vier ernste Gesänge* in the Kipnis Brahms Song Society Set as Op. 120 instead of Op. 121.) The F minor Sonata has been available for several years in the fine viola version by Lionel Tertis and Harriet (CM-183); the companion E flat major work was recorded by Thurston and Foggin in the clarinet version (D-25722/4) and by Primrose and Moore in the viola version (VM-422).

As I wrote in reviewing Primrose's set (September 1938 *Record Supplement*), I prefer the darkly lovely tonal qualities of the clarinet versions of these sonatas, for the suavity, even lushness of the music itself is inevitably enhanced in string performances. And while the old Tertis performance of the present work was—and still is—a masterpiece, it is good indeed to get a clarinet recording, particularly one marked by such skill and restraint as this, Mr. Weber, who has appeared with the New York Philharmonic-Symphony and the N.B.C. Symphony, has been heard on discs before (Musicraft's issue of the Stamitz Clarinet Quartet, MC-205/6), while Miss Lev, one of our outstanding younger native pianists, makes her gramophonic debut in this album.

Brahms: Symphony No. 3 in F major, Op. 90. London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Felix Weingartner. 8 sides, 4-12" discs, Nos. C-69415/8D, in Set CM-353, price complete with album \$6.00 (Parcel Post prepaid to any part of the U.S.A.).

The best Brahms *Third* has been Bruno Walter's (VM-341), but an almost unanimous verdict is sure to give the new Weingartner set precedence over this, as well as over the earlier Mengelberg (CM-181), Krauss (GM-118), and Stokowski (VM-42) versions. As usual with Weingartner one is not swept off one's feet by a first hearing. The lack of any trace of sensationalism or excess makes all his performances seem overly sober and restrained on first acquaintance; with familiarity, as one lives and grows with the set, its full richness and strength, masculine sweetness and vital logic, begin to reveal themselves. This is another Weingartner set like the Brahms *Fourth* (CM-335, October 1938 *Record Supplement*), marked by the same incomparable lucidity of tone and plan—in strong contrast to the Walter version that is blurred both by excessive reverberance and by lax thought. A new and very attractive type of album is used here, but it is the ripe musical artistry contained in the disc grooves themselves that makes this set one not to be missed.

●
Chausson: Ave Verum Corpus. See reverse-side of Franck: *Panis Angelicus*.

Chopin: Mazurkas No. 23 in D major, Op. 33, No. 2 & No. 39 in B major, Op. 63, No. 1. Moriz Rosenthal (piano). 2 sides, 10" disc, No. V-1951, price \$1.50.

A welcome if delayed postscript to Rosenthal's fine Chopin album (VM-338) presents the grand old pianist's performances of a popular and a less familiar mazurka. The D major piece has been recorded before by Rubinstein, Paderewski, and several others; that in B major by Rubinstein only. But Rosenthal need never worry about comparisons: no matter how well the others play, his versions are unique. Here he is in top form and excellently recorded, giving us delightful piquant disc of two of Chopin's most attractive and unfaded dances. The more wayward B major Mazurka is particularly intriguing.

Clérambault: Symphonia Quarta & Lully: L'Amour Médicin Overture—Chaconne. Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire, Paris, conducted by Edward Fendler. 2 sides, 12" imported disc, No. BAM-22, price \$2.00.

Not as exciting as the Mozart *Serenata Notturmo* disc reviewed last month, this companion release by our Parisian colleagues of *La Boite à Musique* is a scarcely less valuable addition to the recorded repertory. Louis Nicolas Clérambault (1676-1749) is usually known only by his organ pieces (or transcriptions like the *Largo* on the G string recorded by Heifetz, V-14369); it is good to hear an orchestral example of his work (probably a *sinfonia* to one of his many cantatas) even though the music itself does not possess much more than period interest. The Lully Overture to Molière's *L'Amour Médicin* is more striking: a nobly eloquent work, if rather incongruous as the prelude to a comedy, and both are excellently played by Fendler.

DEBUSSY

Debussy: Préludes—Book I (11 sides) & Jardins sous la pluie (Estampes No. 3). Walter Gieseking (piano). 6-10" discs, Nos. C-17122/7D, in Set CM-352, price complete with album \$6.00 (Parcel Post prepaid to any part of the U.S.A.).

1. Danseuses de Delphes & 2. Voiles (C-17122D)
3. Le vent dans la plaine & 4. Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir (C-17123D)
5. Les collines d'Anacapri & 6. Des pas sur la neige (C-17124D)
7. Ce qu'a vu le vent d'ouest & 8. La fille aux cheveux de lin (C-17125D)
9. La sérénade interrompue & 11. La danse de Puck (C-17126D)
12. Minstrels & Jardins sous la pluie (C-17127D)

NOTE: The set does not include *Prélude* No. 10, *La cathédrale engloutie*, previously recorded by Gieseking on C-17077D, 10", 2 sides, \$1.00, and for which an extra pocket is provided in the present album.

I remarked, when reviewing the ill-advised domestic release of the 1932 Cortot version of the first book of Debussy *Préludes* (October 1938 *Record Supplement*) that for all Cortot's knowledge of these pieces and pianistic skill, he falls far short of Gieseking's wizardry with these little acquaintances in tone. Here is vivid proof indeed; the only cavilling one can do is to protest against the failure to include the second book as well. Hopefully it will soon follow, and in the meantime we have the first twelve preludes in gramophonic performances that could scarcely be bettered. The recording, while not the very best I have heard (at the top of the keyboard the tones get a bit tinkly), is remarkably fine, both in such an evanescent tonal wisp as *Des pas sur la neige* and as turbulent a tone poem as *Ce*

qu'a vu le vent d'ouest. What I like best of all is the perfect achievement of each piece's atmosphere not by the use of blur or soft-focussing, but by the perfect clarity and balance of the minutest details, comparable to that—in painting—of a Monet or other great *Pointillistes*. Even in the familiar, almost hackneyed, *Minstrels* and *La Fille aux cheveux de lin*, it is sheer delight to hear how Gieseking organizes and integrates every note and phrase, and yet re-animates the music with an entirely fresh vitality. In short, Gieseking does here very much what Beecham has been doing with the Mozart G minor Symphony and other recently recorded works, and his present set wins no less enthusiastic praise.

Delibes: Coppélia Ballet—Excerpts. Orchestre Symphonique de Paris conducted by F. Ruhlmann. 4 sides, 2-10" discs, Nos. C-P17128/9D, price \$2.00 the pair.

Prélude, Mazurka, Andante, Valse lente
Ballade de l'épi, Scène et Valse de la poupée

A neat brace of ballet discs (originally PAT-X96239/40, released in France a few years ago), effectively if not brilliantly recorded, and played with the proper Gallic vivacity and lightness of touch. Several sections (*Prélude, Andante, Ballade de l'épi*, and *Scène*) are not otherwise recorded, as far as I know, and this group substantially augments the present *Coppélia* excerpts in Columbia's catalogue: *Thème slav varié* and *Csardas* (C-69323D, reviewed last November).

Donizetti: L'Elisir d'Amore—Una furtiva lagrima. See reverse-side of Mozart: *Don Giovanni—Il mio tesoro*.

Fauré: Requiem, Op. 48. Les Chanteurs de Lyon (chorus, in Latin), Suzanne Dupont (soprano), M. Didier (bass), Edouard Commette (organ), Le Trigintour Instrumental Lyonnais conducted by E. Bourmauck. 10 sides, 5-12" discs, Nos. C-69423/7D, in Set CM-354, price complete with album \$7.50 (Parcel Post prepaid to any part of the U.S.A.).

Introit & Kyrie (C-69423D)

Offertorium (2 sides, C-69424D)

Sanctus & Pie Jesu (C-69425D)

Agnus Dei (2 sides, C-69426D)

Libera me & In Paradisum (C-69427D)

One of the ugly blots on gramophonic history is the shameful neglect of the first recording of Fauré's *Requiem* (G-W1154/8): issued here as V-11154/8, without an accompanying album or leaflet, and now withdrawn both here and in England. An ignored step-child of the manufacturers, it came to the attention of only a few record-buyers and naturally never achieved any distribution to speak of. The release of a new version gives the industry and public alike an opportunity to atone for the injustice

they both have done a poignantly beautiful work, one of the finest examples of French church music. The *Requiem*, as Philip Miller has pointed out in his Fauré article in the *American Music Lover* and the notes for the present album, "is not a dramatic work—it stands at opposite poles with that of Verdi. It is a *Requiem* without *Dies Irae*—perhaps this fact alone sums up its character. It may be taken as a key to the spirit of the man who wrote it . . . completely sincere, tranquil, and yet deeply felt . . ." The new set, recorded in the Cathedral of Saint-Jean, Lyons, France, is given the benefits of modern technical skill lacking in the earlier version. The solos in the *Offertorium*, *Pie Jesu*, and *Agnus Dei* are not as strikingly sung here as by Malnory-Marseillac and Mortourier in the old set, but they are ably done, and the chorus, organ, and orchestra are excellent. Rarely serene and moving music, the *Requiem* deserves to be known and loved in America as it is in France and I sincerely hope that every record-buyer seeking truly significant tonal experience will hear and obtain these notable records.

Franck: *Panis Angelicus* & Chausson: *Ave Verum Corpus*. André d'Arkor (tenor, in Latin) with organ, violin, 'cello, & harp accompaniment, 2 sides, 12" imported disc, No. C-BFX2, price \$2.00.

Not a new release, but the best of many recorded versions of the popular Franck liturgical song, recently much in demand from the broadcast performances over WQXR in New York. The expressive *Ave Verum Corpus* is an even finer, if less well-known song, and both are warmly sung and spaciouly recorded (like the *Requiem* above in St. Jean Cathedral, Lyons).

Gómez: *Fantasia sobre Temas de Peteneras*. Guillermo Gómez (guitar), 2 sides, 10" disc, No. C-3171X, price 75c.

Peterna is a small town in Andalusia and *Petenera* is one of the oldest forms of Andalusian folk songs, distinctive for its combination of double and triple time. Sr. Gómez's fantasia on *Peteneras* themes is deftly constructed, played with notable lyric grace and smooth rhythmic vitality, and cleanly recorded. One of the most attractive guitar discs of its kind.

Graener: *Der alte Herr*, Op. 49, No. 3 & *Trunk: Vor Akkon*, Op. 14, No. 1. Heinrich Schlusnus (baritone, in German) with piano accompaniments by Sebastian Peschko, 2 sides, 10" imported disc, No. PD-30019, price \$2.00.

The Graener setting of a Münchhausen text has been recorded before by Paul Bender (G-EG6107, reviewed in the *Record Supplement* for April 1938); the Richard Trunk *Lied*, text by K. Stieler, is a first recording. Schlusnus easily outclasses Bender vocally, but his heavier reading of *Der alte Herr* is less amusing and effective, and while he sings the brief *Vor Akkon* broadly, even he cannot stamp it with any notable distinction.

HANDEL

Handel: *Berenice Overture*—Minuet & Purcell: *The Fairy Queen*—Three Dances (Hornpipe, Rondeau, Jig, arr. Jacques). The Reginald Jacques String Orchestra, 2 sides, 12" disc, No. C-69407D, price \$1.50.

In a *Gramophone* review of the British release of this disc about the time of the crisis last fall, W. R. A. spoke of Handel's air, "long founded secure among one's mental treasures," as "a possession that might console even the persecuted. Here the orchestra, like Handel's free spirit, is at its best. No world can be entirely bad that offers such balm for wounding memories and frightening threats." One cannot escape from the world around us to Handel or the lovely, vernal dance airs of Purcell (perhaps even more precious additions to one's mental treasures), but at least they enable one to face it more serenely and courageously.

Handel: "Concerto" à 4 in D minor. The Danish Quartet (flute, violin, 'cello, piano), 2 sides, 12" imported disc, No. G-DB5218, price \$2.50.

A grand record, but unworthily labelled. The name of the Danish Quartet appears here in no less than four languages, but there is no cue to the identification of the work itself other than the conventional movement indications, *Adagio*, *Allegro*, *Largo*, *Allegro*. I paged laboriously through the instrumental works in the Handel Gesellschaft volumes in a vain search for the original, but just when the task seemed impossible, the New York Library's index revealed Schott's publication (1935) of two newly discovered *Concerti à 4*, D minor and D major, edited by Fritz Zobeley. The present work is No. 1 of these works, discovered in MS. in the library of Count Schönborn in Wiesentheid-Unterfranken (Bavaria). And while the MS. was not in Handel's handwriting, the works are reasonably and safely enough ascribed to him on the basis of internal evidence and their resemblance to other works written around 1715 (when he probably visited Count Schönborn—a 'cellist of some skill—and undoubtedly presented him with some compositions). The works are described in the *Händel-Jahrbuch* of 1931 and a note in the published score says that they were probably enlarged into concertos by the addition of a leading part for 'cello. At all events the present piece is one of the most enchanting examples of Handel's chamber writing I have heard on records or of, and it is played with exquisite delicacy of color and phrasing by a perfectly balanced ensemble, and faultlessly recorded. The Danish group (Gilbert Jespersen, flute; Erling Bloch, violin; Torben Svendsen, 'cello, and Lund Christiansen, piano) has recently embarked on a series of discs for Danish H.M.V. and I look forward to hearing further examples of its admirable playing.

Harris: *Chorale for String Sextet*. Kreiner Sextet, 2 sides, 12" disc, No. V-12537, price \$1.50.

Originally the second movement of a String Sextet written in 1932, this Chorale was amplified for string orchestra in

1933 and given its first performance in that form by Rodzinski at Los Angeles. Mr. Harris writes of the chorale, "It is conceived as a modern expression of the choral form which is a variation development of a given traditional theme, generally of a religious nature." The theme is "taken from the melodic contours of early American church tunes" for the composer rightly believes that hymns, particularly those of the Lutheran Church, had an incalculably significant influence on the American pioneers and on all varieties of American music. As Walter Piston pointed out, the theme itself is "consciously or unconsciously derived from the German love-ditty *Ach, wie ist's so möglich*, which doesn't destroy the composer's thesis, for even before Luther's own time, secular tunes were often and readily adapted to church use. It is unfortunate that the whole String Sextet has not been recorded, for it is one of Harris's finest works, and the contemplative and eloquent chorale loses something by the lack of contrast with its context. Even by itself, however, it is a powerful and moving work, and as nobly played and recorded here, it ranks as one of the outstanding recorded representations of contemporary American music.

HAYDN

Haydn: Concerto (Piano and Orchestra) in D major.

Marguerite Roesgen-Champion & Orchestre Symphonique de Paris conducted by Marius-Francois Gaillard. 4 sides, 2-12" discs, Nos. C-P69405/6D, in Set CM-X118, price complete with album \$3.25.

Reviewed from the imported pressings (PAT-PGT27/8) in the July 1938 *Record Supplement*, the first of three gramophonic versions to be given domestic release, indeed the only one to reach these shores in any form. (The other two are by Count Higashirushimi and the New Tokio Symphony for Japanese Polydor, and a Landowska harpsichord and orchestra set on G-DB3293/5.) On re-hearing the present performance I have no hesitancy about repeating my earlier comments: Mme. Roesgen-Champion, herself a first-rate harpsichordist—as many recordings testify—makes no mistake in switching to the piano for this work and shows admirable taste and skill in employing a quasi-harpsichord technique, savoring to the full the dry, tangy sparkle of Haydn's effervescent tonal wine. The accompanying orchestra is no less vivacious and restrained, and the crystalline recording captures every delicate nuance of both it and the soloist. A gracious and thoroughly delightful bit of music-making.

Haydn: Quartet (Strings) in G major, Op. 54, No. 1

Budapest String Quartet. 4 sides, 2-12" imported discs, Nos. G-DB2905/6, price \$5.00 the pair.

A welcome release, for the only other recording is that by the Pro Arte four in Vol. 2 (now out-of-print) of the Haydn Quartet Society. This G major work, noted for the brilliance of its first movement and the quiet beauty of its Allegretto, is an apt exemplification of Tovey's note

(Cobbett's *Cyclopedia Survey of Chamber Music*): "From Op. 33 onwards one of his [Haydn's] strongest impulses was towards terseness, and it was balanced by an equally strong impulse towards expansion. Outward symmetry was for him an obstacle to the reconciling of such opposites of a fundamental condition of art . . . It is possible to sum up his main resources by the simple general statement that Haydn invented a brilliant type of coda à la Beethoven, and used fully developed codas instead of recapitulations." The Budapest Quartet plays and is recorded in top form, which is to say that the gramophonic performance is one that any other ensemble will find nearly impossible to equal, let alone surpass.

Haydn: Symphony No. 102 in B flat major (old B. & H. No. 12, Salomon Series No. 9). Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Serge Koussevitzky. 6 sides, 3-12" discs, Nos. V-15304/6, in Set VM-529, price complete with album \$6.50 (Parcel Post prepaid to any part of the U.S.A.).

It is no extraordinary happening in the record manufacturing scheme of things that this first recording of one of Koussevitzky's greatest concert favorites should have appeared in England almost two years before its domestic issue (and it was recorded in Boston, mind you), but I shall never get used to such release vagaries. However, we get it at last and should be grateful enough to make no more than mild protests at the long delay. It's a great work and as the excellent album leaflet—thematically illustrated by the way—notes, "will come as a distinct surprise to those whose conception of Haydn is limited to regarding him as a small scale Beethoven. This symphony represents a mature and elderly Haydn far removed from the delicate, small-boned, studiously-graceful composer of minuets . . . In the dramatic temperament, the extension of symphonic form and in the texture of its orchestration (for example: the end of the second movement), we hear ample evidence that the romanticism which so completely swept Nineteenth Century Europe was already making its way in the world. It is worth knowing that this symphony, which dates from the years 1794-1795, followed after Haydn's direct association with Beethoven, and that it is contemporaneous with the budding literary romanticism of the Schlegels and Jean Paul Richter in Germany, with the painting of Goya in Spain, and with the high tide of the revolution under Danton, Marat and Robespierre in France."

The breadth, athleticism, and expressiveness of this symphony tempt Koussevitzky to play with a will. There is occasionally too much sheer bigness of tone and a consequent loss of detail and musing serenity, but one is swept along and lifted up so buoyantly that it is hard to criticise the lack of restraint. Theoretically I frown upon it, but I find so much enjoyment and invigoration in the work that it's a very theoretical frown indeed. And I imagine most hearers of the set will be far too delighted to make any reservations at all.

Kreisler: *La Gitana* ("Arabian-Spanish Song") & *Liebesleid* ("Old Viennese Song"). Fritz Kreisler (violin) & Franz Rupp (piano). 2 sides, 10" disc, No. V-1950, price \$1.50.

Replacing his old recordings of *Liebesfreud* (V-1891), Kreisler turns now to its companion piece, *Love's Sorrow*, and the less familiar *La Gitana* (replacing V-6608 and the acoustic G-DA275* respectively). *Liebesleid* has all the old Kreislerian magic, but the Spanish air is a dull one and not even the silkiest playing and recording can give it point or savor.

Lie: *Sne*. See reverse-side of Stravinsky: *Pétrouchka—Danse russe*.

Lully: *L'Amour Médecin Overture—Chaconne*. See reverse-side of Clérambault: *Symphonia Quarta*.

Lully: *Airs from Four Operas*. Miguel Villabella (tenor, in French), Solange Renaux (soprano), chorus & orchestra conducted by Maurice Cauchie. 4 sides, 2-12" discs in Set CM-X117, price complete with album \$3.25.

Amadis de Gaule—Bois épais & Armide et Renaud—Plus j'observe (tenor) (C-P9153M)

Persée—O Mort! & Roland—Par le secours (soprano & chorus) (C-P9154M)

These notable discs, the only Lully operatic recordings outside *L'Anthologie Sonore* to be done in authentic versions, have been available for several years in imported pressings (PAT-PGT20/1), part of a set that also included two orchestral discs (PAT-PG47/8) representing *Thésée*, *Amadis de Gaule*, *Atys*, and *Proserpine*. Presumably the latter will also be made available domestically. Meanwhile it is a pleasure to hear and recommend again the four arias, straightforwardly sung, and excellently accompanied by M. Cauchie's admirable little orchestra, scaled to proper Lullian proportions. Even the recording still sounds good, although it hardly boasts the luster of the finest recent discs. It is particularly interesting to compare Lully's *Plus que j'observe ces lieux* with Gluck's setting of the same text in *Armide*, recorded by Rogatchewsky on C-4127M.

Lvovsky: *Requiem*. See reverse-side of Archangelsky: *God, hear my prayer*.

Massenet: *Elégie* (arr. Gómez) & *Torroba:* *Fandanguillo*. Guillermo Gómez (guitar). 2 sides, 10" disc, No. C-3169X, price 75c.

There really isn't much point in transcribing the *Elégie* for the guitar; Gómez does it as well as it can be done, but it's still a poor version of the piece and a worse example of music for the guitar. Torroba's *Fandanguillo* (made famous by Segovia on V-1487), on the other side, is a true guitar work and a fascinating piece of music. It is well played, but hardly with the polished virtuosity of Segovia.

Mendelssohn: *Concerto* (Violin and Orchestra) in E minor, Op. 64. Yehudi Menuhin & Orchestre des Concerts Colonne conducted by Georges Enesco. 7 sides, 4-12" discs, Nos. V-15320/3, in Set VM-531, price complete with album \$7.00 (Parcel Post prepaid to any part of the U.S.A.).

The perennial Mendelssohn concerto has been recorded before by Kreisler (VM-277), Szigeti (CM-190), and Kulenkampf (T-E1824/7). I have always esteemed Szigeti's highest, despite the coarseness and obvious age of his set's recording, but Kreisler has been more of a popular favorite, and Menuhin is likely to give him a good run for his money. He is recorded here with big, forward tone and the orchestral sonorities come out with perhaps an extra high polish. Yet there is no loss of clarity. Indeed, except for occasional slight lapses of articulation or ensemble in the performance, there is little or nothing here to criticize unfavorably. Yet is it only nostalgic familiarity that leads me still to cling to Szigeti's version? Or is it the Hungarian violinist's greater poise, sensitive turn of phrase and color, freer and more airy spirit? Menuhin's hearers will have to decide for themselves; at any rate in this set they are sure of getting a fine recorded performance.

Mendelssohn: *Sonata* (Organ) No. 6—*Andante*. See reverse-side of Bach: *Chorale-Prelude*, "Komm Gott, Schöpfer, heiliger Geist."

MOZART

Mozart: *Concerto* (Piano and Orchestra) No. 18 in B flat major, K. 456 (7 sides). Lili Krauss & London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Walter Goehr. **Mozart:** *Unfinished Sonata* (Piano and Violin) in C major, K. 404 (1 side). Lili Krauss & Simon Goldberg. 4-12" discs, Nos. P-R20404/7, price complete with album \$9.25.

Another addition to the rapidly expanding list of recorded Mozart piano concertos, and—perhaps even more exciting news—the first gramophonic appearance with orchestra of Miss Krauss, who in the space of a couple of years and on the basis of a handful of discs has come to be the favorite Mozart pianist of hundreds if not thousands of collectors. I number myself among them and welcome every new opportunity to pay tribute to her invariably admirable sensibility and skill. The work she plays here was written in September 1784, Mozart's twenty-eighth year, for the blind pianist Marie Therese von Paradis (who is represented as a composer on discs by a *Sicilienne* played by Thibaud and others). Except for a slight lack of definition in the orchestral bass, everything about this set calls for praise: first Miss Krauss, of course, who is at her matchless best; then the deft accompaniment, the warm and lucid recording, and the smooth surfaces of the pressings. Even Mozart's own cadenzas for the first and third movements are used (but I suppose we could count on Miss Krauss for that), and they demonstrate convincingly how much better and more point-

edly his cadenzas are than those of later composers and virtuosos. I only wish I could add that the work itself is one of Mozart's best, but I can't honestly do that. It's delightful, but not top-notch Mozart; however that's more than good enough for most of us. On the odd-side we get Miss Krauss, now with her collaborator in the Mozart Sonata Series, Simon Goldberg, in the fragments of the unfinished piano and violin work in C major, K. 404, New K. 385d, a brief *Andante* and *Allegretto* never before recorded and probably entirely unknown even to most avid Mozartians.

Mozart: Don Giovanni—Il mio tesoro, Act II & Donizetti: L'Elisir d'Amore—Una furtiva lagrima, Act II. Richard Crooks (tenor, in Italian) & Orchestra conducted by Wilfred Pelletier. 2 sides, 12" disc, No. V-15235, price \$2.00.

It is curious that Ottavio's popular air, many times recorded, does not exist in a really first-rate isolated modern disc. I liked Fort's easy delivery in C-4193M (March 1938 *Record Supplement*), but it was not outstanding vocally and handicapped by a weak studio orchestral accompaniment. There is nothing weak about Crooks' accompaniment, or his robust nasal performance, for that matter, but it just isn't my idea of Mozartian singing in tonal quality, phrasing, delivery of the figurations, or anything else. Mr. Crooks' style, idiosyncrasies and all, and the robustness of both singing and recording are better suited to the Donizetti aria, but even this is affected and over-sung.

Offenbach: Gaité Parisienne Ballet (arr. Rosenthal).

London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Efrem Kurtz. 4 sides, 2-12" discs, Nos. C-69401/2D, in Set CM-X115, price complete with album \$3.25.

Overture, Tortoni, Galop, Valse, Marche, Grande Valse, Finale: Can Cans Nos. 1 & 2, and Quadrille.

Massine's ballet set to Offenbach's gayest tunes is one of the liveliest spectacles and most popular items in the *Ballet Russe's* repertory. One of the Ballet company's own conductors is appropriately chosen to make this first recorded version and needless to say the sparkling work is played with the utmost vivacity and gusto. But these delightful qualities suffer a severe handicap in the heavy-handedness of the recording engineer. Probably the conductor is also partly to blame, but between the two the bright scoring and effervescently rhythmed tunes are inflated to monstrous proportions. Instead of a noisy, circus-band version like this, the *Gaité Parisienne* calls for the no less exuberant but far more buoyant and transparent treatment given the recent *Can Can Medley* on V-36213 reviewed in the *Record Supplement* for August and November 1938.

Parry: England & Jerusalem. See under *Collections* (Royal Command Concert).

Prokofieff: Classical Symphony—Gavotte. See reverse-side of Stravinsky: *Pétrouchka—Danse russe*.

Puccini: La Tosca—Recondita armonia, Act I & E lucevan le stelle, Act III. Galliano Masini (tenor, in Italian) with orchestral accompaniments. 2 sides, 10" discs, No. C-4221M, price \$1.00.

Masini's previous domestic release (C-9151M, *L'Arlesiana & Lodoletta*, December *Record Supplement*) revealed an Italianate tenor of considerable lyric distinction, but the present disc does him little credit. Again the vocal qualities are impressive, but the new Metropolitan star reveals little interpretative skill and less taste in these lax and over-emotional versions of the familiar Cavaradossi arias.

Purcell: The Fairy Queen—Three Dances. See reverse-side of Handel: *Berenice Overture—Minuet*.

Purcell: To Heart-Easing Mirth. See under *Collections* (Royal Command Concert).

Rachmaninoff: Preludes in A flat major, Op. 23, No. 8; A minor, Op. No. 8; D flat major, Op. 32, No. 13. Eileen Joyce (piano). 2 sides, 12" imported disc, No. P-E11377, price \$2.00.

None of these preludes has been recorded before, but on hearing them—even in Miss Joyce's scintillating and brilliantly recorded performances—one can hardly wonder that they have not been done earlier on discs or more often in concert. For all their densely intricate writing and florid virtuosity, they contain few melodic ideas of any point or significance. The principal attraction of the disc is the new testimony it affords of Miss Joyce's pianistic talents, and they are deserving of more rewarding material.

Rubinstein: The Prisoner, Op. 78, No. 6 & Popular Russian: Black Eyes. Feodor Chaliapin (bass, in Russian) with Jean Bazilevsky (piano) & Aristoff Choir and Balalaika Orchestra respectively. 2 sides, 12" disc, No. V-15236, price \$2.00.

Another valuable addition to the great gramophonic legacy of Chaliapin, one of the British special releases issued shortly after his death last spring. The basso's skill with Russian songs is often underestimated and while this disc does not compare in significance with the *Boris* series, it is a remarkable revelation of other facets of his dramatic genius and vocal powers. The powerful Poushkin setting by Rubinstein is particularly fine, for Chaliapin is in better voice here than in any of his other last recordings. The popular *Black Eyes* seems to be of an earlier recording vintage, but that is of little handicap to the broadly swinging performance by Chaliapin and the Aristoff choir and balalaika orchestra.

Saint-Saens: Marche héroïque, Op. 34. Orchestre Symphonique, Paris, conducted by F. Ruhlmann. 2 sides, 12" disc, No. C-P69408D, price \$1.50.

This is probably the best of the three available discs of the lively little march Saint-Saens wrote to commemorate the death of his painter friend, Henri Regnault, in the 1871 siege of Paris, but it was obviously recorded several years ago and the music itself is of little importance.

SCHUBERT

Schubert: Andantino varié (on a French theme) in B minor, Op. 84, No. 1. Heinz Jolles & Bernard Schulé (piano 4-hands). 2 sides, 12" imported disc, No. BAM-21, price \$2.00.

La Botte à Musique version of this Andantino has been preceded by a performance by Artur and Karl Ulrich Schnabel (V-14829 in Set VM-436) and Petri's version of the Taussig piano solo arrangement (C-69249D), reviewed in the *Record Supplements* for April and September 1938 respectively. I still think the music, for all its pleasant songful flow and demure innocence, is distinctly on the dull side, but I have to admit that its slight merits are revealed far more attractively here than in the Schnabels' reading. Jolles and Schulé play it with exquisite delicacy and restraint, and the intimacy of their performance is beautifully captured in as transparent recording of *mezza voce* and *pianissimo* piano tone as I have ever heard.

Schubert: Rosamunde, Op. 26—Ballet Music Nos. 1 in B minor (Allegro moderato; Andante un poco assai) & No. 2 in G major (Andantino). London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Bruno Walter, 2 sides, 12" disc, No. V-12534, price \$1.50.

Credit goes first to the correct labelling in accordance with the complete *Rosamunde* score: the popular Ballet Music in G major, given as No. 1 in some Thematic Catalogues, is properly No. 2. It has often been recorded, but Walter's is the only version of the less familiar Ballet No. 1 in B minor apart from that in Hamilton Harty's oldish *Rosamunde* set (recently given domestic release as CM-343 and reviewed in the November 1938 *Record Supplement*). Walter runs through both pieces with good restraint and a nice sense of their warmly lyric qualities. A light, but exceedingly attractive and melodious disc.

Schubert: Sonata (Violin and Piano) No. 1 in D major, Op. 137, No. 1 (3 sides); Sonata No. 3 in G minor, Op. 137, No. 3—3rd & 4th Movements (1 side). Ossy Renardy & Walter Robert. 2-12" discs, Nos. C-69403/4D, in Set CM-X116, price complete with album \$3.25.

The first violin sonata (or sonatine) has not been recorded since the days of the Schubert Centennial in 1928 and the old Sammons-Murdoch version (C-17010/2 in CM-94) will be withdrawn in favor of the new set. Renardy and Robert also play the last two movements (*Menuetto and Allegro moderato*) of the third sonata, done before by Menges and De Greef in a 1928 H.M.V. version, now withdrawn, and more recently by Karl Freund and Suzan Fischer (PD-47118/20, not yet available in this country). Young Mr. Renardy again demonstrates the bright, sure touch and clean, light tone that have distinguished his earlier releases, and he is deftly accompanied and recorded. The music itself is distinctly minor Schubert, but even here the well of graceful melodic invention never runs dry.

Schubert: Seligkeit & Wehmut, Op. 22, No. 2. Hertha Glatz (alto, in German) with piano accompaniments by Franz Rupp. 2 sides, 10" disc, No. V-1949, price \$1.50.

Miss Glatz's first release (Schubert's *Frühlingsstraum* and *Gretchen am Spinnrade*, V-15247) was reviewed last month. Her new disc gives a less uneven and on the whole more favorable impression of her singing. But though her voice is better managed here, it is not notable for its attractiveness, and I do not place this version of *Seligkeit* on the same plane with those by Elizabeth Schumann (V-15167 in VM-497) and Ria Ginster (V-7821). *Wehmut* has not been recorded before, to the best of my knowledge, and this fact gives the disc its principal appeal. Miss Glatz—I have learned since last month—enjoys considerable repute abroad as a *Lieder* (and particularly Schubert *Lieder*) singer, and has appeared in this country with the Chicago Opera Company.

Schumann: In der Fremde, Op. 39, No. 1 & Der Nussbaum, Op. 25, No. 3. Charles Panzéra (baritone, in French) with piano accompaniments. 2 sides, 10" imported disc, No. G-DA4809, price \$2.00.

Not a new release, but re-listed to meet a constant demand. Despite the fact that these two familiar *Lieder* are sung in French translations (by Boutarel) as *Au Loin* and *Le Noyer*, Panzéra's fine voice and musicianship have won a constantly growing audience for this admirable little disc.

J. Strauss (arr. Dimitri Tiomkin): The Great Waltz—Excerpts. Miliza Korjus (soprano, in English), Toscha Seidel (violin), & M.G.M. Orchestra conducted by Nat. W. Finston. 2-10" discs, price \$1.00.

Tales from the Vienna Woods (2 sides, V-4410) One day When We Were Young & There Will Come a Time (V-4411)

It was only a question of time until Miss Korjus (pronounced "gorgeous" according to Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's publicity) was "discovered" by Hollywood, for her European recordings and photographs clearly indicated that she was a natural for musical films. The present discs, her first American releases, are taken from her Hollywood debut picture, *The Great Waltz*, based on Johann Strauss tunes, arranged by Tiomkin with English texts by Oscar Hammerstein, II. They are devoted largely to a display of her amazingly acrobatic coloratura technique, backed up by lush movie orchestrations and suave violin solos by Seidel, but the coloratura writing is feeble display stuff, unworthy of Miss Korjus' really extraordinary voice and skill. Anyone who enjoyed the film, likes a good Strauss tune, and isn't fussy about how elaborately it's dressed up, is sure to enjoy these discs; those who want to hear Miss Korjus at her best, however, are recommended to try some of her European recordings, particularly the Rimsky-Korsakov arias on V-12021, *Lakme* Bell Song and Prayer on V-12136, *Zauberflöte* Aria on V-11921.

Stravinsky: Pétrouchka—Danse russe (arr. Dushkin): Lie: Sne (arr. Szigeti), & Prokofieff: Classical Symphony—Gavotte (arr. Grunes). Joseph Szigeti (violin) & Nikita de Magaloff (piano). 2 sides, 10" disc, No. C-17130D, price \$1.00.

A sparkling miniature recital by Szigeti, light in substance compared with his major recordings, by marked by a delightful variety of music (transcriptions of two gay Russian dances and a nostalgic Norwegian song) and the invariably deft and piquant Szigetian virtuosity.

Tchesnokov: Prayer During Lent. See reverse-side of Bortniansky: Hymn of the Cherubims No. 7.

TEMPLETON

Alec Templeton in a Collection of his own Compositions. 4-10" discs in Set GSV-2, price complete with album \$5.00 (Parcel Post prepaid to any part of the U. S. A.).

Topsy Turvy Suite (Bach Goes to Town, Soldier's Minuet, Undertaker's Toccata) & Ghost Rhapsody (GSV-1010/1)

Longing & Pines (GSV-1012)

Voyage à la lune, Mother's Lullaby, & Friendship (GSV-1013)

Alec Templeton's superb impressions, satires, and improvisations (Gramophone Shop "Varieties" Set No. 1, reviewed in the December Record Supplement) proved to be such an extraordinary hit that we would have been foolish to waste any time before issuing another Templeton album. His satirical repertory was by no means exhausted by the first set, but for contrast and in response to the requests of his concert and broadcast public, the present group of works is confined to his own compositions in more or less—some, decidedly less—serious vein.

The featured work of course is the Bachian essay in swing, *Bach Goes to Town*, that is currently the prize hit in Benny Goodman's repertory. Goodman plays Henry Brant's orchestration of the Fugue only (V-26130, 75c) and plays it well, but here we have the original, complete with prelude, and its witty combination of saucy audacity and fluent contrapuntal writing should make the composer's version an even livelier public favorite. With *Bach Goes to Town* are the two other pieces in the *Topsy Turvy Suite*, the impressionistic—"semi-syncopated and classical"—*Ghost Rhapsody* (that proves the styles of Debussy and Ravel are no less happy grist for the swing mill than that of Bach) and *Pines*, and the quaint *Mother's Lullaby* that Mr. Templeton wrote as a child on a tune his mother used to sing to him. Then, turning from piano solos, Mr. Templeton demonstrates that his versatility is no less than his virtuosity by singing to his own accompaniments the graceful song of a little French boy to the moon and a fervent love song, *Longing with*—for coda to the all-Templeton program,

a recitation with background music of Dinah Muloch's reflections on *Friendship*.

Those for whom the Templeton satires were the most hilarious recordings of the Christmas—or any—season will not want to miss *Bach Goes to Town*, *Undertaker's Toccata*, and *Ghost Rhapsody*, while those who are more readily appealed to by sentiment than by humor will prize the two songs and *Mother's Lullaby*. And the growing army of dyed-in-the-wool Templeton devotees will treasure both types of work alike.

Torroba: Fandanguillo. See reverse-side of Massenet: *Elégie*.

Trunk: Von Akkon, Op. 14, No. 1. See reverse-side of Graener: *Der alie Herr*.

WAGNER

Wagner: Tannhäuser—Overture and Venusberg Music (Bacchanale, Paris Version, 6 sides) & **Prelude to Act III** (Tannhäuser's Pilgerfahrt, arr. Stokowski, 3 sides). Philadelphia Orchestra & Women's Chorus (in German) conducted by Leopold Stokowski. 5-12" discs, Nos. V-15310/4, in Set VM-530, price complete with album \$9.00 (Parcel Post prepaid to any part of the U. S. A.).

One of the most successful of all Stokowski recordings was the Paris Version of the *Tannhäuser* Overture and *Venusberg Music* (VM-78). But it was issued in 1930 and much of the passion and sonority of the Philadelphians' memorable performance was lost by technical processes that were then the last word, but are now vastly improved. Here we get the Stokowski reading in its full panoply of dynamic contrasts and glowing orchestral colors. And here too the substitution of a string transcription of the Sirens' song is wisely abandoned in favor of the women's voices called for in the score (and singing, as they should, the German text). A superb set in itself, but Stokowski goes on for extra good measure to give us the first up-to-date recording of the *Prelude to Act III* (Tannhäuser's *Rome Pilgrimage*), omitted in the Columbia *Tannhäuser* set (CM-154) and available previously only in dated versions by Dr. Weissmann, Coates, and Von Schillings. It is strange that this poignantly dramatic prelude is not better known as an isolated piece, for it is a true symphonic poem in itself and miraculously effective in this performance that ranges from a sultry tonal lambency to an almost overpowering blazing climax (one that I'm afraid some reproducing instruments will have considerable difficulty in negotiating successfully).

von Weber: Oberon—Overture. London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham. 2 sides, 12" disc, No. C-69410D, price \$1.50.

It's getting a little monotonous to hail each new Beecham disc as the finest available gramophonic edition of its particular work, but until Sir Thomas or his equally alert engineering colleagues start to get weary or impatient, I'm afraid I'll have to go on singing the same old burden. Here, as usual, I can't find one of the some dozen rival *Oberons* that can give the new record a close run. For once the sprites and fairies dance on truly light, fantastic toes, and the peroration is broadly march-like and exultant rather than noisy circus display. Suggested slogan for Columbia's advertising department: "You can't go wrong with Beecham!"

Vaughan Williams: Serenade to Music (A Tribute to Sir Henry J. Wood). B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra & Sixteen Soloists (in English) conducted by Wood. 4 sides, 2-12" discs, Nos. C-69433/4D, in Set CM-X121, price complete with album \$3.25.

As a musical tribute this pastorate reveries on "How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank" from the first scene of Act 5 of *The Merchant of Venice* has its keenest significance for Englishmen, most of whom have grown up in music under the catholic hand of Sir Henry J. Wood. But one does not have to be a "Proms" regular to appreciate the ripe beauty of this lovely and singularly Delian choral-orchestral poem. It is not one of Vaughan Williams' major works, but it is one of rare loveliness and charm. It is done here as on the occasion of Sir Henry's Jubilee with a choir made up of Britain's most noted singers (Isobel Baillie, Stiles-Allen, Elsie Suddaby, Eva Turner, Muriel Brunskill, Heddlie Nash, Walter Widdop, Parry Jones, Frank Titterton, Harold Williams, to name those best-known), and needless to say it is sung and played with more than routine expressiveness and care. The recording is a bit over-heavy, particularly of the choir, at times, but that is the only adverse criticism one can make of an unusual work and one of the most gracious musical tributes of our times.

COLLECTION

Royal Command Concert held at Albert Hall, London, Empire Day, May 24th, 1938. 4 sides, 2-12" imported discs, Nos. G-C3016/7, price \$4.00 the pair.

Purcell: To Heart-Easing Mirth (arr. Davies). Isobel Baillie, Elsie Suddaby, Astra Desmond, & Chorus. **Stevens: The Cloud-Cap't Towers.** Massed Choirs—Sir Hugh Allen. **Welsh Folk Song: Y Bore Glas.** Margaret Rees & Welsh Chorus. **English Folk Song: Twankydllo.** Robert Easton & English Chorus. (G-C3016)

Parry: England. Mary Jarred & Massed Choirs. Parry: Jerusalem & God Save the King—Final Verse. Massed Choirs. (G-C3017)

An interesting set of "actual" recordings made at the famous Royal Command Concert in London last spring.

Particularly happy is the inclusion of Davies' arrangement of a noble Purcell air (whose source I have not yet been able to identify) and the rousing folk or traditional song *Twankydllo*. Several competent soloists and a big chorus are backed up by an orchestra that is not given label credit. Naturally there is considerable reverberance, but the feeling of a large hall performance is impressively captured in the recording.

FOLK MUSIC

Creole Folk Songs: En avant, grenadiers; Ah, Suzette, chère; Z'amours Marianne; Pauv' piti mom'zelle Zizi. Mabel Hobson (soprano) with piano accompaniments by Virginia Westbrook. 2 sides, 10" disc, No. V-25838, price 75c.

I am indebted to Mr. Cleveland Sessums of New Orleans for calling my attention to this disc, originally issued as a special Louisiana release. It is not a folk record masterpiece, but it presents a spiritedly sung group of representative Creole patois airs, almost impossible to find on records nowadays. Two of the songs were once done in different versions (titled *At Suzette* and *Mamzelle Zizi*) by Edna Thomas on C-1863D, now unfortunately withdrawn.

French Provincial Folk Songs in Modern Arrangements (2nd Set). Yvonne Gouverné Chorus (in French) & Orchestra conducted by Roger Desormière. Soloists: Mme. M. T. Holley & O. Ertaud; MM. Yvon Le Marc Hadour & J. Peyron. 10 sides, 5-10" imported discs, Nos. CdM-511/5, price \$7.50 the set (plain album 50c additional).

A further group of contemporary settings of provincial French songs, similar to the *Chant du Monde* group (CdM-505/7) reviewed in last month's *Record Supplement*.

Provinces, songs and arrangers represented here are: CdM-511, Angoumois: *Le fils du cordonnier* (arr. Auric) & Normandie: *La mort de Jean Renard* (arr. Delannoy). CdM-512, Poitou: *Le roi a fait battre tambour* (arr. Auric) & Bretagne: *Les cloches de Nantes* (arr. Jaubert). CdM-513, Angoumois: *Le condamné à mort* (arr. Delannoy) & Aunis: *La femme du marin* (arr. Honegger). CdM-514, Chanson de bord: *Le 31 du mois d'Aout* (arr. Sauveplane) & Saintonge: *Le jaloux* (arr. Loucheur). CdM-515, Angoumois: *Le soldat par chagrin* (arr. Jaubert) & Bretagne: *Un jour sur le pont de Tréguier* (harm. Bourgault-Ducoudray, orch. Elsa Barraine).

As in the earlier group, the arrangements are reasonably straightforward, free from affectations and out-of-place intricacies; and the singing and recording are distinguished by spontaneity and spirit.

Popular Jewish Devotional Melodies: Eili, Eili (Shalitt, arr. Jacchia) & Rachem (Manna-Zucca, arr. Jacchia). Boston "Pops" Orchestra (Roger Voisin, trumpet solo; Julius Theodorowicz, violin solo) con-

ducted by Arthur Fiedler. 2 sides, 12" disc, No. V-12536, price \$1.50.

Not true folk music, of course, but "composed" songs that seem to be gradually passing into the "traditional" or quasi-folk music class, much as Stephen Foster's songs are approaching the status of folk stuff. The arrangements used here were made by the late Agide Jacchia when he was conductor of the "Pops" concerts and have long ranked among the most popular and frequently performed items in the Boston orchestra's summer programs. Fiedler plays them with the proper gravity and expressiveness, but neither he nor the recording loses anything of the brilliant climaxes.

Popular Russian Song: Black Eyes. See reverse-side of Rubinstein: *The Prisoner*.

DICTION

Choral Verse Speaking. Moira House (Eastbourne, England) Verse Speaking Choir, directed by Mona Swann. 4 sides, 2-10" imported discs, Nos. G-B8761/2, price \$3.00 the pair.

A Navajo Rain Chant (tr. N. Curtis), *The Stream's Song* (L. Abercrombie), *Sanpan* (Pao Lang Pee), *The Main Deep* (J. Stephens), *Song for St. Cecilia's Day* (Dryden) (G-B8761).

Salute (A. Macleish), *La Marche des Machines* (A. S. J. Tessimond), *Pied Beauty* (C. M. Hopkins), *India* (W. J. Turner), *The Eagle* (Tennyson), *Fog* (C. Sandburg), *The Centaurs* (J. Stephens) (G-B8762).

A continuation of the choral verse speaking series begun in England a couple of years ago by elementary school children and the London Verse Speaking Choir under the direction of Marjorie Gullan (G-B8268/71). This kind of mass reading or chanting of poetry has a direct kinship with music, and while these discs are of special interest to teachers, they are remarkably interesting even to the layman for their dramatic intensification of the fine verses chosen.

E. E. Cummings reading Seven of his Poems. 2 sides, 12" disc (special edition), price \$2.00.

Poem or Beauty Hurts Mr. Vinal, *Item*, *Buffalo Bill*, *In Just Spring*, *Oh Sweet Spontaneous Earth*, *Since Feeling is Just*, *Somewhere I Have Never Travelled*.

For many months I've been approached for information on a recording of poems by E. E. Cummings that my inquirers swore they had heard but could not trace in any catalogue. Neither could I, until finally the disc was tracked down as a special release made for Mr. Cummings' publishers, Harcourt Brace & Company. Here it is and while I can't give it a general recommendation for either diction disc collectors or schools, there surely are a few gramophone owners who remember *Is 5 and other Poems* with glee and who will want the author's own version of

some of his works, the hilarious take-off on American advertising slogans (*Poem, or Beauty Hurts Mr. Vinal*) in particular. The recording is not unusually good, but Mr. Cummings speaks with notable clarity.

The Story of My Flight. Miss Amy Johnson. **Walford Davies: Royal Air Force March Past.** H. M. Royal Air Force Band conducted by Flight Lt. J. H. Amers. 2 sides, 10" imported disc, No. C-DB189, price \$1.50.

Not a new release; in fact a very old one, but a disc that is in such constant demand that we have been forced to import a considerable stock. I can't imagine that it has much significance as a historical document (it was recorded in Sydney, N. S. W., at the conclusion of Miss Johnson's England-Australia flight) and my guess—after hearing the disc itself—is that most purchasers obtain it as a comic monologue. It's a little cruel on the noted aviatrix, but her timid, gushing "story," straight out of some sob sister's family journal column and delivered in a near-Cockney accent, is decidedly funny. The rousing march on the other side is thrown in for good measure: Miss Johnson is the heroine of the day, but hardly in the way she must have expected.

Verneuil & Berr: Azais—Scène de l'attente & Le retour de la Baronne, Act III. Max Dearly & Jeanne Saint-Bonnet (in French). 2 sides, 10" imported disc, No. G-K7036, price \$1.50.

Re-listing a popular diction disc of scenes from a comedy by Louis Verneuil and Georges Berr, featuring the noted and highly individual French character actor, Max Dearly.

REFERENCE BOOK

The International Cyclopedia of Music and Musicians. Edited by Oscar Thompson. With an Introduction by Lawrence Gilman. 2000 pages, bound in blue buckram. Price \$12.50.

This has been an open season on new music encyclopedias, but of several one-volumes works that have been published recently, this is by far the handsomest, most inclusive, and the most carefully and accurately prepared. I may be perhaps a little prejudiced, for I was invited to contribute one of the special articles (*Recorded Music—Present Status*, complementing an article on the *History of Recorded Music* by Ira A. Glackens), but discounting that, I'm still convinced that the Cyclopedia is a remarkably able and comprehensive work. Where Grove's and Riemann's Dictionaries are badly out-of-date, the new work contains all the latest information on composers and their works, and in many cases the lists of works are far more extensive and detailed than even those in the six-volume Grove's work. I've found an occasional error, and undoubtedly there are quite a few of the inevitable slips, but it is astonishingly accurate on dates (the eagle-eyed Mr. Slonimsky had a hand in that) and on the whole I should say that it was one of the most convenient, attractive, and useful reference volumes I have ever come across.

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